

# Arlington Historic District Commissions

Whittemore Robbins House  
April 23, 2009

**Final – approved 6/25/09**

## Commissioners

Present: A. Frisch, M. Kramer, D. Levy, M. Logan, S. Makowka,  
M. Penzenik, T. Smurzynski, J. Worden

## Commissioners

Not Present: M. Hope Berkowitz, B. Cohen, J. Hindmarsh, M. Potter

## Guests

Present: B. Amidon, M. Krawchuck, A. Jackson, D. Cerundolo, Z. Garfall

1. Appointment of Alternate Commissioners: Jason/Gray Historic District Commission Appointees– S. Makowka, A. Frisch, T. Smurzynski, D. Levy, M. Logan; Pleasant Street Historic District Commission Appointees– S. Makowka, A. Frisch, T. Smurzynski, D. Levy, M. Logan; Mt Gilboa/Crescent Hill HDC – S. Makowka, A. Frisch, M. Logan, T. Smurzynski, Central Street Historic District Commission Appointees – A. Frisch, M. Kramer, T. Smurzynski, D. Levy, M. Logan
2. Approval of Minutes – S. Makowka moved to table March minutes. J. Worden moved approval of February minutes, seconded by M. Kramer, approved unanimously. March minutes tables until May meeting.
3. Communications:
  - a. Solar Panel info from GO Green
  - b. Email request for wood gutter recommendations – Hoppe – forward email to D. Levy for personal recommendation
  - c. D. Levy made call to folks on Pleasant Street (187 Pleasant Street) to find out from architect where they are – still on track to start in about a month.
  - d. J. Worden said Norfolk address on Pleasant Street has now painted the fence
  - e. S. Makowka reported that 28 Maple Street – restoration and windows approved. Everything being done now except for front porch. Noticed that hoods they constructed over windows were not per approved plans. No band molding, cornice box clearly too small and not per approved plans. Did a lot of work to get to that point. Clearly inconsistent with plans. All windows facing towards street will have incorrect hoods removed and replaced (per Dave Berry). When they

do the porch they'll do the rest of the windows. S. Makowka will stay on top of this project.

4. New Business

- a. Continuation of Formal Hearing re: 21 Central Street (application withdrawn and procedurally denied). J. Worden moved that the Central Historic District Commission having fully reviewed the application before it, deny the application for a certificate for appropriateness based on not having received adequate information to approve said application. Denial seconded by M. Logan. Roll call: Denial by M. Penzenik, A. Frisch, T. Smurzynski, M. Kramer, D. Levy, M. Logan, J. Worden. (Denial letter will be issued to applicant).
- b. Formal Hearing re: 10 Jason Court (Amidon) for renovations. Ben Amidon (owner) gave presentation. History of Jason Court, it's in back yard of 23 Jason Street. At one time the house was moved forward and subdivided to make 4 new lots. 6, 10, 11 and 12. Expanding the house – really enjoy living near Arlington Center, convenient location. Goal to expand house without expanding footprint – stay in the area. All neighbors said to be very enthusiastic with exception of Wordens. Submitted petition with 5 speakers only 2 of whom are property owners.. Front elevation – extend roofline approx. 2-3 feet on angle (vertical 1 foot), put on small dormer on front – roofline up for debate – as drawn gable dormer – side elevation described. Extension of roofline and flat roof off back. Extension of roof creates height required. Not pictured in diagram is covered back porch – screened in porch which will remain unaltered. Joists will be cut and they'll use existing structure of roof without stripping it off. Preserves character of house. Views from Jason Court – clear that you can see 3 sides of house, from Jason Street only limited angles that you can see 10 Jason Court from Jason Street. Viewing from Jason Court – M. Penzenik having arrived – S. Makowka recuses himself and M. Penzenik will sit on the commission for this hearing. A. Frisch asked about existing peak of house – will it be higher or are dormers giving existing height. Dormer will be set back 16 inches. M. Penzenik was shocked to see house at 11 Jason Court and that's exactly what this house is going to look like on the back. From the proposed elevation she finds it would be very inappropriate in her opinion. This really is a lovely house and she thinks the gable dormer on front is very large for the size of the house and the size of the roof. Shed dormer is overwhelming on house and in raising the ridge she thinks it's very awkward. D. Levy sympathizes with what they're trying to do – ended up tinkering with roof line – doesn't look great. They're not easy to re-transform. Thinks it's very awkward but does sympathize with space needs. M. Kramer went by and thought inappropriate on Dutch Colonial house. Understands situation but thinks architectural change not appropriate with style of house. A. Frisch has a problem with

dormer on a dormer. Houses on Pleasant Street have same type of dormers according to owner. A. Frisch says throws balance of house off. Porch in back – any logical way to gain on that footprint to build up. M. Penzenik suggested talking with building dept. about other possibilities. Applicant said this doesn't work because there would be no way to make the bedroom which is the need. J. Worden pointed out that mate to this house had enclosed their porch and when they went to ZBA to get it legalized, and they were turned down. D. Levy asked if we could send a note of support to the ZBA if they decided to go for a variance. M. Penzenik said raising the ridge is part of problem. Not raising ridge doesn't give enough height for bedrooms. S. Makowka suggested you explore building off back of house with ZBA.

Applicant showed floor plans so commissioners could understand problems with building off back and not using dormer. S. Makowka asked applicant if we could continue the hearing and allow applicant to speak with building dept. and continue discussion with possible other alternatives. Applicant Agreed.

- c. Formal Hearing re: 215 Pleasant Street (Gruber) re: shed. View from street – doors wouldn't be visible from street. M. Penzenik said location is unfortunate and would prefer not to view shed. S. Makowka said it's set over from the side, almost in the woods. Applicant said looking to have bushes encircle shed. Shed will be amongst the bushes. Side of shed not on pavement. Ramp will lead from pavement to shed. Shed is as simple as possible – just wanting something functional. D. Levy asked about sheds – policy – material, foundation, zoning, size, etc. Our issues are: no vinyl siding, no wood, something that's architecturally sympathetic to house. In past not approved front yard sheds – actually zoning law against it. This is a side shed. M. Penzenik asked about windows – 1 window on side facing the house. S. Makowka said minimally visible. Wood sash – like a barn sash. No gutters. M. Penzenik made comment relative to stylistic things – if you don't tell contractor that you want particular details on eve and rake then you're going to get flat stock and it will look contemporary. Appropriate to have some architectural detail. Applicant trying to match what current house looks like – M. Penzenik reminded him to have it specific. While you have no overhang on rake as drawn if you want to have like 5 inches overhang on back or whatever. M. Kramer asked when planning to construct – within next month was answer. S. Makowka asked about bringing back wall down lower – concern about 8 foot high peak. Applicant willing to bring it back down to 4 ½. Footprint 7 x 8 (56 sf). Having tucked in and lowered down will be important. Will want monitor to approve details. M. Penzenik moved that the Pleasant Street Historic District Commission, having fully reviewed the application before it, finds that the project under consideration, if constructed according to the plans submitted therewith with the following changes – 1) the outside height

of rear wall be 4 ½ ft sloped to remain as shown in plans , 2) that the structure be set as low as possible on ground and not on pavement, 3) that the eve and rake details to match or be harmonious of house 4) approval by monitor prior to installation. Seconded by T. Smurzynski, voted unanimously. Monitor appointed D. Levy

- d. Formal Hearing re: 160 Westminster Ave. (Jackson). Plan approved last year and is being built. 3<sup>rd</sup> story (top floor) has bathroom that currently exists 5' x 7 ½', running through project and upon changing architects they find little problems. Brought out 2<sup>nd</sup> level out 7' to get nice window. Main reason why drew it this way was that contractor told him that's best way to do it – wall sitting on wall. D. Levy asked about bringing a faux corner board down – S. Makowka said you can't see that part because of ground level of back yard. Not much of a difference. S. Makowka said he has 2 issues – you see this addition from street, it's tucked in behind, set back, existing condition with wall looks much smaller in person. Load bearing wall is rear wall, side wall isn't main load bearing structure. Option there to move it back another 18" will make dramatic difference on how you perceive it from the gable end. A. Frisch asked about window – wood with fixed muntin on outside to match others in house. Side of room, type of window – square window, round or what. Square window. Rear of house on rake use large board and mirror it above. Setback from face of gable end of main original house. D. Levy said from plans shown should be set back another 18". M. Penzenik said she feels it should be worked out with monitor. J. Worden said minimum should be determined by monitor. J. Worden moved that the Mt. Gilboa/Crescent Hill Historic District Commission approve alteration of plans as submitted with revised plans at this hearing, be approved subject to the following modifications 1) rake and freeze board be of a style and size comparable to that found on end gable (north gable) 2) window to be appropriately sized, final determination by monitor, 3) north wall be set back not less than 3 feet from façade of existing northern gable. Seconded by a. Frisch, approved unanimously. J. Hindmarsh to continue as monitor. Applicant asked about shed in rear yard and was given guidelines.
- e. Continuation of Formal Hearing re: 179 Westminster. D. Cerundolo reviewed – style of porch (more craftsman than Victorian), house is fairly simple in comparison with neighbors. OK with stair bay, want to put stair bay there for more space inside room. Concern with windows. Didn't care for roof incline. Stairs portrayed like stonework. Going with wood. Windows were big issue – since then explored a lot of options. Porch – couple of options. Option A vs. Option B – column style is different. Turned post or tapered post. They prefer Option A – tapered column. One option by S. Makowka squared column – lamb's tongue. S. Makowka said he has no problem, but not trapezoidal column. Happy to go with Option B – turned

columns. Lynn Lumber has lots of options for architectural elements. Victorian appropriate column to be approved by monitor prior to installation. Forget Doric – turned columns are what are authentic. D. Levy asked about giving applicant size indication. S. Makowka asked about hood over doorway. Feature on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is original, just a way to incorporate that feature with the other 2 entrances. Wood steps to go with porch. Stairway windows – eliminated all but with exception of one. Lowered pitch of roof. Muntins 2 over 2 like front of house. Window in stairwell can be 2 lights over 2 lights as on front of house. Squat looking. Clapboards would die into the corner board on tower area. Narrow and taller window on stairwell. Bring sense of relative size to the tower. Locate bottom of window at safe distance of stair, make window higher in up direction. D. Levy said he feels like he needs architect to nail down many of the issues. Don't want to delay work starting, but so many little detail changes we're talking about, some drawings show details, some don't – this would work better if he were here. Stair bay window – want to elongate window. Roof is lowered to match other side of house. Wooden stairs to match porch instead of stone. Rail to match column and porch rail. We tend to spec the rail – not 2x4 skimpy, want prefashioned railing with another 2 x 4 attached to bottom that makes it look deeper and substantial. Doesn't need to be 6" thick, but more than the Home Depot style. S. Makowka asked about post at bottom of stairs – a little detail. Railing to match porch. D. Levy suggested going to websites looking for customized railings more appropriate. More websites .org and .edu that have info on railings that would be historically appropriate. S. Makowka said spec balusters 4" on center, not 5" as in drawings. S. Makowka asked about front door – new door. 2 over 2 style windows are original, wanting to stay with that design. All windows need to be replaced. Nothing to preserve. Jeld-wyn has some windows that work well and have been suggested by others. A. Frisch asked about front door. S. Makowka asked for more detailed drawings and specs – what exactly we're talking about. Applicant approved extending continuation of hearing until June 15<sup>th</sup>. M. Penzenik offered to meet with applicant and architect. Felt architect doing good job, just needs to be able to answer specific questions.

5. Other Business

- a. Pending legislation regarding historic districts and 40B. S. Makowka discussed legislation pending in front of Senate to amend 40B laws to do a number of things – allow oversight for wetlands protection, require more notice to local communities, to clarify that an 40B project developed within HD would 1<sup>st</sup> need to get COA from local HDC. Has been one hearing – only 4 people attended. J. Worden has been in touch with Chris Skelly, suggested he get in touch with Preservation Mass. Legislator S. Makowka spoke with was very interested in getting educated by HDC. We can submit written testimony. Meeting

amongst legislators today, more formal hearing to come in about a month. Senate Website – last item (relative to tracking affordable housing projects) repeats HDC language. Senator Hedlund submitted 4 bills – one was HD, one was perpetuities, one was wetlands. One error in HD, one should say local HDC or HC. Discussion about sending written testimony from AHDC. S. Makowka will send letter with our issues and circulate to Commission. Deadline is end of May.

Meeting adjourned at 10:48pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Greeley, Executive Secretary